

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 14092 141254Z

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 L-03 H-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 IO-13 MCT-01 /048 W

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R 140836Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 220

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 14092

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, RP

SUBJECT: HEARINGS BEGIN AGAINST PC ACCUSED OF TOURTURING  
POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: MANILA 13573

1. COURT MARTIAL PROCEEDINGS BEGAN SEPTEMBER 14 AGAINST FOUR MEMBERS OF THE POLICE CONSTABULARY (PC) ACCUSED OF TORTURING POLITICAL PRISONERS AT CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA. THE FOUR, IDENTIFIED BY THE LOCAL PRESS AS FIRST LIEUTENANT CLIFFORD NOVERAS, SERGEANT JACINTO CALICA, CORPORAL EDDIE ABALOS, AND CORPORAL HENRY RATO, ARE BEING TRIED AT PC HEADQUARTERS (CAMP AGUINALDO) BY A FIVE-MAN MILITARY TRIBUNAL HEADED BY COL. PRUDENCIO REGIS. ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL PRESS, WHICH DEVOTED FRONT-PAGE HEADLINES TO THE COURT MARTIAL STORY, THE ACCUSED WERE ARRAIGNED TWO WEEKS AGO AND PLEADED NOT GUILTY.

2. IN THE FIRST DAY OF THE HEARING, TWO MILITARY DOCTORS PRESENTED TO THE TRIBUNAL THE RESULTS OF AN AFP INSPECTOR GENERAL'S INVESTIGATION, WHICH THE PRESS SAID WAS ORDERED BY DEFENSE SECRETARY ENRILE. THE DEFENDANTS WERE CHARGED WITH VIOLATING THE ARTICLES OF WAR; LT. NOVERAS IS ADDITIONALLY CHARGED WITH CONDUCT UNBECOMING AN OFFICER AND GENTLEMAN. THE FOUR PC ARE ACCUSED OF TOURTURING DURING INTERROGATION THREE PERSONS UNDER DETENTION WITH FATHER EDICIO DE LAT TORRE FOR ALLEGED SUBVERSION. NOVERAS  
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PAGE 02 MANILA 14092 141254Z

STANDS ACCUSED OF PRESSING A HOT IRON TO THE SOLE OF

THE FOOT OF CENON SEBRANO. CALICA ALLEGEDLY "SUBJECTED TO INDIGNITIES" MRS. CRISTINA RODRIGUEZ. ABALOS IS ACCUSED OF PISTOL WHIPPING AND FORCING AN IRON BALL DOWN THE THROAT OF JULIAN GIRON. THE FOURTH DEFENDANT, RATO, WAS NAMED IN SOME PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE HEARING, BUT NO MENTION WAS MADE OF THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM.

3. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT MEMORY A TORTURE TRIAL HAS BEEN WIDELY PUBLICIZED BY THE GUIDED PHILIPPINE PRESS. THE TIMING OF THE COURT MARTIAL HEARING AND THE UNUSUALLY AMPLE PRESS COVERAGE SUGGEST THE MOVE IS A DIRECT RESPONSE BY THE MARCOS REGIME TO THE IMMINENT RELEASE OF THE AMENSTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON POLICIAL PRISONERS AND THE FRASER COMMITTEE HEARINGS. SULLIVAN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** COURT PROCEEDINGS, PRISONERS WELFARE, POLICE FORCES, POLITICAL PRISONERS, COURTS MARTIAL  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 14 SEP 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ElyME  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976MANILA14092  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760346-0723  
**From:** MANILA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Line Count:** 75  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 MANILA 13573  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ElyME  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 JUN 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03 JUN 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <29 SEP 2004 by ElyME>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** HEARINGS BEGIN AGAINST PC ACCUSED OF TORTURING POLITICAL PRISONERS  
**TAGS:** SHUM, RP  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006